

FOR OUR PATIENTS

# Newsletter

April/May 2024



**DALLAS  
NEPHROLOGY  
ASSOCIATES**  
*Kidney Care Excellence  
Since 1971*

## The Role of Nutrition and Diet in Chronic Kidney Disease

### The Impact of Diet on Chronic Kidney Disease (CKD)

We all know that what we eat affects our health. Food choices become even more important for someone with kidney problems. Why is this the case? What you eat and drink becomes nutrients for energy and repair. What is not needed becomes waste products. Kidneys remove these waste products. With kidney disease, the waste products and extra fluids are not removed easily and can build up in the body. This buildup can cause more kidney damage and other health problems. Selecting kidney-friendly foods and beverages can ease this burden and slow the progression of Chronic Kidney Disease (CKD). Here are eight key points about a kidney-friendly diet:

#### 1: Choose the Right Protein

Too much protein, especially animal protein, can make your kidneys work harder. Choosing more plant-based proteins is easier on your kidneys. Learning about the amount and types of protein that are right for you is essential. Need help? Ask for a referral to a DNA dietitian.

#### 2: Balance Your Fluids

Getting enough water and fluid is vital for good kidney function. How much fluid is enough? If you are unsure, ask your healthcare provider's advice on how much and which types of liquids are right for you.

#### 3: Manage Your Diabetes

If you have diabetes, controlling your blood glucose is a top priority. High blood sugar levels can damage the blood vessels in your kidneys and other parts of the body. Check your blood sugar regularly, take your medicines, and follow a balanced diet. Choose foods rich in fiber, such as whole grains, beans, fruits, and vegetables. These can help stabilize blood sugar levels.



#### 4: Limit Potassium and Phosphorus if needed

Some patients develop an imbalance in one or both of these minerals, which can be harmful in different ways. Your kidney doctor will review your blood tests and let you know if any changes are needed. You can follow these labs to look for trends. Don't change your diet unless advised by your doctor or dietitian.

#### 5: Check Before Taking Vitamins and Supplements

Some vitamins and supplements may be harmful if you have kidney problems. They may also affect how your medicines work. Ask your doctor or dietitian before taking anything that is not prescribed.

#### 6: Keep a Healthy Weight

Keeping a healthy weight is important for kidneys. Too much weight can cause kidney problems. Extreme diets or weight loss supplements may hurt your kidneys. It is best to make small, realistic lifestyle changes that you can follow long-term.

#### 7: Lower Salt or Sodium in Your Food

Too much sodium can lead to high blood pressure and fluid retention, which can make kidney problems worse. Cutting back on salt and salty seasonings is a good start. Using herbs and spices instead of salt can add flavor without the sodium. Processed foods like cured meats and canned soups often contain 'hidden sodium.' Learn to read food labels and find tasty, low-sodium options.

#### 8: Choose Real Food over Processed or Ultra-processed Food

**Real foods** are unaltered foods that do not contain chemicals or additives. **Processed foods** are foods that have been altered in some way. This can be as simple as freezing, canning, or using preservatives to keep the food from spoiling. Processed foods are not all "bad" and can be part of a healthy diet. For example, yogurt, low-fat dairy, packaged salads, pre-cut veggies, nuts, seeds, and others can be good choices.

**Ultra-processed foods** are made from manufactured ingredients with unnatural shapes and colors. They taste so good because of the combination of fat, salt, and sugar. This combination releases the "feel good" hormone, Dopamine, and you want to continue eating. Companies purposefully create this combination in their food-like items. Think of soft drinks, candy, ice cream, sweetened breakfast cereals, potato chips, chicken nuggets, and even mass-produced bread and ketchup. They don't make you feel full or satisfied, so you tend to overeat, increasing your risk for obesity and diabetes. Do not eat ultra-processed foods.

There is no "one size fits all" diet plan for CKD. Get information from reliable sources. Be careful about kidney diets on the internet. Information can be confusing and may not be right for you. Ask your doctor for a consult with one of DNA's dietitians for Medical Nutrition Therapy (MNT) to get specialized guidance for your own nutrition needs.

## A Recipe for Kidney Care: Medical Nutrition Therapy (MNT) with a DNA Dietitian

It can be hard to know what to eat when you have kidney disease, especially when there is so much conflicting information online. However, with guidance from a specialized Registered Dietitian Nutritionist (RDN), you can slow the progression of kidney disease and reduce the risk of complications.

### What is Medical Nutrition Therapy?

Medical Nutrition Therapy (MNT) is a specialized approach to manage various medical conditions, such as diabetes, heart disease, obesity, and kidney disease. Registered Dietitian Nutritionists (RDN) provide the consults. Dallas Nephrology Associates has a robust nutrition department with a team of RDNs ready to help. Here's what you can expect:

#### Expert Guidance

DNA's dietitians have advanced training to help people with kidney problems. We also help manage other conditions, such as diabetes, weight management, GI issues, gout, kidney stones, and more.

#### Personalized Nutrition Planning and Tailored Support

The dietitian will consider factors like your kidney function, blood tests, food allergies, and other health concerns. By listening to your likes, dislikes, and cultural or religious food practices, the dietitian can give you simple meal ideas and tips so you don't have to stress about what and how much to eat. You and your dietitian will set achievable goals through gradual diet changes that fit your lifestyle.

*"It is health that is real wealth  
and not pieces of gold and  
silver."*

– Mahatma Gandhi



### Are you ready to take charge of your health?

We understand how important nutrition is for people with kidney problems. Our team of dedicated dietitians is here to help you on this journey. To get started:

- Talk to your doctor about MNT and decide if this is right for you. If yes, your doctor will provide a referral.
- After the billing team checks your insurance, we will call you to schedule your appointment. The appointment can be in-person at one of the DNA clinics or via telehealth.
- Consider asking a family member or friend to join, especially if they help you to grocery shop or cook meals.

Try a kidney-friendly meal that is fun, tasty, and dietitian-approved. For a plant-based meal, substitute cooked black beans or chickpeas for ground turkey.

### Fiesta Tacos

- 1 pound of lean ground turkey
- 1 onion, medium, chopped
- 3 cloves of garlic, minced
- 3 tablespoons of chili powder (check label to be sure salt is not added)
- 1 teaspoon cumin powder
- Corn tortillas (soft tortilla or unsalted tortilla chips)

Brown meat. Drain. Add onion, garlic, cumin and chili powder and stir with 1/4 of cup water. Simmer for about 30 minutes until thick. Serve on soft corn tortillas or with tortilla chips. Top with a little sour cream and some Pico de Gallo\*. Makes 4 servings. Each serving has about 3 ounces of cooked meat.

### Pico de Gallo \*

- 1 onion, medium, chopped
- 1 green onion, chopped
- 1 red bell pepper, medium, chopped
- 1 Roma tomato, chopped
- 1/2 (or more) fresh jalapeño, seeded, chopped
- 1/2 teaspoon garlic, minced
- 1/8 teaspoon black pepper
- Fresh lime (optional)

Mix and refrigerate for 30 minutes. Add juice from 1/2 of a fresh lime before serving.

## Patient Education Programs

DNA offers a range of educational opportunities tailored to our patient's needs. We provide group classes, specialized one-on-one workshops, and a hands-on ESKD options clinic designed with your unique problems in mind.

Ask your provider which one is right for you.

**214.358.2300 | 877.654.3639**



Join us as Dallas Nephrology Associates' Clinical Dietitians, Carolyn Cochran and Nadiya Lakhani talk about medical nutrition therapy.

Scan the QR code to the right with your smartphone to learn more about medical nutrition therapy now!



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